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OO RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHHM RUEHJO RUEHMA
DE RUEHKA #6258 2850248
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O 120248Z OCT 06 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2122
INFO RUCNCLC/CHILD LABOR COLLECTIVE
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1312
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9401
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7601
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8748
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1541
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0253
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1065
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0035
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0079
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC

UNCLAS DHAKA 006258

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [BG](#)
SUBJECT: GARMENT WORKERS RAMPAGE

¶1. (SBU) Local media reported that garment workers blocked roads, ransacked over 100 factories, and looted storefronts in the Dhaka areas of Mipur, Uttara, Gazipur and to a limited extent Savar over a period of four hours on 10 October. Police fired blank shotgun rounds and deployed tear gas in an effort to disburse rioters, but the police response, according the media, was slow and ineffective.

¶2. (SBU) Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers Export Association (BGMEA) Fazlul Hoque quickly called a press conference to demand that law enforcement agencies, including the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), and the army bring the situation under control. Hoque threatened to close garment factories if police did not punish the people responsible for the violence. Police told embassy that they were told not to take strong measures against striking workers because of the potential impact on the national elections in January.

¶3. (SBU) Labor advocate Kalpona Akter told laboff that eleven unregistered organizations, called the Garments Sramik Sangram Parishad (GSSP), and inspired by an independent labor wing of the Communist Party-Bangladesh led by labor agitator Moshrefra Mishu, were primarily responsible for the violence. Akter said that the GSSP organizations demanded higher piece-rates and advance payment of their Eid bonus, issues that were best negotiated at the factory level, but Mishu was "out to make a name for herself." Akter added that 40 other labor organizations elected not/not to take part in the strikes, saying that the GSSP issues had more to do with individual factory worker discontent than industry wide labor issues.

¶4. (SBU) According to Akter, the 40 labor organizations that did not participate in the 10 October unrest plan a general nationwide strike on 15 October to protest the new labor law and advocate for a higher minimum wage. She said it would be peaceful. Aware that the GSSP planned to hold street rallies on the 15 October as well, non-GSSP labor organizer Aminrul Amin feared that if the GSSP caused violence, the police would confuse his peaceful workers with the GSSP.
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